

## Message Text

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OPIC-06 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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R 190830Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5388

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

UNCLAS YAOUNDE 0909

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, CM, US

SUBJECT: TIMBER EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION WRAP-UP

1. SUMMARY: TIMBER EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION LEFT DOUALA MARCH 5 AFTER ONE WEEK IN CAMEROON PLEASED WITH GENERAL RESULTS OF MISSION. NO IMMEDIATE SALES IN OFFING BUT FUTURE PROSPECTS APPEAR GOOD TO EXCELLENT. KEY TO SALES REMAIN FINANCING, SERVICE AND SPARE PARTS AVAILABILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST DAY OF MISSION IN YAOUNDE FEBRUARY 27 MISSION BRIEFED BY AMBASSADOR AND STAFF ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION. MID-MORNING MEETING FOLLOWED WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF TIMBER EXPLOITERS AND EXPORTERS SYNDICATE. WHILE SLOW TO START, MEETING TURNED INTO WARM WELCOME BY DOZEN EXPLOITERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND FAO OFFICIAL HEADING DENG-DENG FOREST DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. ONE SAWMILL OWNER VOLUNTEERED TO SHOW KOSS, LAMB AND SANDERSON HIS MILL AT MBALMAYO AND FAO OFFICIAL AGREED TO TAKE BIRGEL AND FERRETI TO PROJECT TRAINING SCHOOL. MOST PROMISING CONTACTS MADE WITH CAMEROONIAN EXPLOITERS WHO ARE JUST STARTING BUSINESS. EXPATRIATE FIRMS BY AND LARGE

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NON-COMMITTAL AS MOST HAVE SURPLUS LATE-MODEL EQUIPMENT.

3. AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 27 CHIEF OF MISSION BRANIGAR ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR AND COMMERCIAL OFFICER PAID PROTOCOL VISIT ON VICE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THAT MINISTRYS DIRECTOR OF FORESTS. MISSION MEMBERS HELD PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH BUSINESSMEN AT EMBASSY OR VISITED AGENTS. AMBASSADORS RECEPTION WELL ATTENDED BY EXPLOITERS AND FORESTRY OFFICIALS ALLOWING APPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP CONTACTS.

4. FEBRUARY 28 BUSINESS MEETINGS CONTINUED AT EMBASSY FOR SOME MEMBERS, WHILE THOSE WHO ACCEPTED PRIVATE EXCURSION INVITATIONS VISITED MBALMAYO PLYWOOD FACTORY AND SAW MILL AND FAO FORESTRY TRAINING SCHOOL. MISSION AND COMMERCIAL OFFICER DEPARTED FOR DOUALA AT 2000. TOTAL OF TWENTY INTERVIEWS HELD IN YAOUNDE.

5. DOUALA ACTIVITIES STARTED WITH INFORMATIVE BRIEFING BY ANGLOPHONE PROVINCIAL FORESTRY CHIEF SATURDAY, MARCH 1. MISSION MEMBERS WERE THEN FREE TO VISIT SEFIC SAW MILL IN BASSA SECTION OF DOUALA AND PURSUE BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS. MID-MORNING ENTIRE GROUP LEFT FOR FORMER WEST CAMEROON TO VISIT TIMBER INDUSTRIES (CAMEROON) LTD. CONCESSION AT MUYUKA AND SEE LOCAL LOGGING CONDITIONS. SUNDAY, MARCH 2, ALL MISSION MEMBERS BUT LAMB OPTED FOR BEACH TRIP TO VICTORIA. LAMB, TOGETHER WITH HIS SWISS AGENT AND VISITING NORMAN SPRINGATE REPRESENTATIVE, SPENT SUNDAY WITH GILBERT LONGUE DISCUSSION LATTERS LOGGING APERATION.

6. INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS HELD CONTINUOUSLY MARCH 3 AND 4 AT HOTEL BIC. TOTAL 52 INTERVIEWS HELD IN DOUALA. BECAUSE OF 1974 LAW REQUIRING 60 PERCENT PRO-CESSING OF FELLED TIMBER, SHEPARD AND ZUERCHER WERE IN PARTICULAR DEMAND BOTH DAYS AND ALMOST FULLY BOOKED. FERRETTI, BIRGEL AND SANDERSON MADE USEFUL CONTACTS WITH LARGE VARIETY OF AGENTS IN DOUALA AND THOUGHT THEY HAD GONE LONG WAY IN SOLVING REPRESENTATION PROBLEMS.

7. GENERAL SESSION WITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND  
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FORESTRY SYNDICATE AFTERNOON MARCH 3 DREW FULL HOUSE AND SPIRITED DISCUSSION. LOGGERS AND PROCESSORS BROUGHT UP FINANCING, SERVICE AND SPARE PARTS PROBLEMS AND EMPHASIZED THAT EQUIPMENT PURCHASES RESTED ON TIMBER SALES. COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT AT AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER DOUALA ASSISTED GREATLY IN PREPARATION AND CARRYING OUT MISSION AND TRANSLATING DURING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETING.

8. VERY LARGE TURNOUT, INCLUDING GOVERNOR OF LITTORAL PROVINCE, AT COCKTAIL-BUFFET AT CONSULS RESIDENCE EVENING MARCH 3 PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR MISSION MEMBERS AND OTHER VISITING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN TO MEET UNUSUALLY BROAD RANGE OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

9. MARCH 5 BRANIGAR MADE COURTESY CALL ON GOVERNOR OF LITTORAL PROVINCE, WHO STATED THAT GURC POLICY IS TO ENCOURAGE COMEROONIAN FIRMS TO GAIN CONTROL OVER COUNTRYS NATURAL RESOURCES. MAJORITY MISSION MEMBERS DEPARTED MARCH 5 VIA PANAM FLIGHT.

10. COMMENT: MISSION MEMBERS SEEMED WELL PLEASED WITH NUMBER AND QUALITY OF CONTACTS IN CAMEROON AND DIRECTOR AND OTHERS COMMENTED (AS THEY PROBABLY DID IN EACH COUNTRY) THAT IT WAS "BEST STOP ON TRIP. " THEIR REALISTIC GOAL OF MAKING LONGER-RANGE ASSOCIATIONS AND INVESTIGATING MARKET POTENTIAL WAS MUCH APPRECIATED LOCALLY. AT LEAST ONE EXPLOITER IS INCLUDING KOSS ON IMMINENT US TRIP AS RESULT OF MISSION. VIRTUALLY ALL MISSION MEMBERS HAVE PLANS TO FOLLOW UP ON MORE-PROMISING CONTACTS WHICH WE THINK WILL BE REWARDING IN LONG HAUL, EMERGING SMALL-SCALE CAMEROONIAN EXPLITERS SHOWED KEENEST INTEREST IN MISSION BUT BECAUSE OF UNDER-CAPITALIZATION AND INEXPERIENCE, THIS MARKET WILL TAKE LONGER TO DEVELOP, ALTHOUGH MISSION MEMBERS AGREE POTENTIAL IS THERE. FINANCING REMAINS KEY TO CAMEROONIAN MARKET, ESPECIALLY FOR INDIGENOUS EXPLOITERS AND PROCESSORS. SEVERAL BANKS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN EX-IM BANK CCF PROGRAM NOW THAT LOCAL INTEREST RATES ARE MUCH CLOSER TO US RATES BUT IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE SOME TIME TO DEVELOP THIS POSSIBILITY. LATTER WILL BE SUBJECT

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OF SEPARATE TELEGRAM BY CONSULATE DOUALA.  
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